

# PROPOSAL EVALUATION

## Proposition 50, Chapter 8

### Integrated Regional Water Management Grant Program

### Implementation Step 2 Proposals

**PIN:** 9604  
**Applicant Name:** Watersheds Coalition of Ventura County  
**Project Title:** Watersheds Coalition of Ventura County IRWMP Implementation

**Funds Requested:** \$ 25,000,000  
**Total Project Cost:** \$ 65,740,971

<b>Total Proposal Score:</b> 114
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**Description:** This proposal consists of 11 projects representing the highest priorities of the Watersheds Coalition of Ventura County (WCVC) Region, which includes three watersheds: Calleguas Creek, Santa Clara River, and Ventura River. The projects in this proposal provide a broad distribution of benefits across the entire county and focus on benefits to water supply, water quality, habitat, flood protection, and recreation.

**Question: Adopted IRWMP and Proof of Formal Adoption**

2

The IRWMP is currently under development and scheduled for adoption prior to January 1, 2007.

**Question: Description of Region**

4

The County of Ventura is a political subdivision of the State of California, but the focus of the IRWMP is mostly for the three primary watersheds in the county: Ventura River, Santa Clara River, and Calleguas Creek. The Cuyama Watershed, located within the Los Padres National Forest, is not included in the IRWMP. The applicant describes the region well and provides supporting information and discusses the water resources in the area and major land use categories. Social and cultural make-up is also provided. However, the IRWMP does not address either the future water resources of the region or the water demand for the minimum of 20-year planning horizon.

**Question: Objectives**

5

The applicant defines success as when individual projects meet their goals and cumulatively contribute to IRWMP objectives. The five IRWMP objectives came from the combined effort of the Calleguas Creek Watershed Management Plan Steering Committee Group and the Ventura Countywide IRWMP Group. The stated objectives are all under the County jurisdiction and address issues pertinent to the residents of the County. Short- and long-term priorities are listed. The discussion addresses conflicts and problems within the region. The applicant provides a forum for conflict resolution.

**Question: Water Management Strategies and Integration**

4

The applicant describes the IRWMP based on a wide range of water management strategies and discusses how they will meet planning objectives. The applicant describes the projects to be undertaken and the specific water management strategies the projects address. A discussion on the how individual watershed plans were integrated county-wide is included. The applicant states that the final IRWMP will correlate the water management strategies with the objectives to assign priorities for implementation. The groundwater management section could be stronger especially since a number of the projects are groundwater related.

**Question: Priorities and Schedule**

3

Through a stakeholder driven process, the applicant determined the priorities and goals of the region. The applicant describes how the IRWMP meets those goals. The applicant explains in detail how the priorities will be achieved through the implementation of the selected priority projects. The proposed projects are categorized into short-term projects ready for immediate implementation and mid-term projects set for implementation within the next three years. A long-term list of projects and programs will be identified for implementation and will be included in the final IRWMP. The applicant does not fully address the criteria because it does not discuss how: 1) decision-making will be responsive to regional changes, 2) responses to implementation of projects will be assessed, and 3) project sequencing may be altered based on implementation responses.

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***Question: Implementation***

**4**

The implementation projects identified in the IRWMP are categorized by watershed. The IRWMP describes numerous projects to be implemented and the manner in which those projects were selected. The IRWMP includes a detailed schedule with start and end dates. The IRWMP discusses the benefits of each individual project and relationships (linkages) to other projects. Long-term actions are not included in the IRWMP, but are supposed to be included in the final IRWMP. The applicant does not clearly describe the institutional structure that will ensure plan implementation.

***Question: Impacts and Regional Benefits***

**4**

The primary interregional benefit of the IRWMP will be the creation of an institutional structure to bring together different water interests within the region into a single unified group with a common purpose and direction. Benefits to the DAC of El Rio were discussed. The applicant adds that another major benefit of a regional plan is the cost savings to the individual agencies. The IRWMP does not address the potential negative impacts. Considering that extensive use of groundwater in the region, observed land subsidence, salt water intrusion, and groundwater basin overdraft, additional discussion on the benefits and impacts to groundwater appears necessary.

***Question: Technical Analysis and Plan Performance***

**4**

The applicant states that a detailed strategy for monitoring plan performance will be identified as part of the development of the final IRWMP. The IRWMP includes a relationship table for implementation data, a table of data types and sources, and two lists of existing plans and reports showing the structural data management system to accompany IRWMP implementation.

***Question: Data Management***

**5**

Data will be disseminated through a website that the applicant created. Originally, the main purpose was to keep coalition members on top of the latest information regarding the IRWMP. The next step for the website is data management. All data collected will be stored and maintained on the website for use by other agencies and the public. According to the IRWMP, the WVCV has established data protocols to ensure that information is collected and organized in formats with sufficient detail that is compatible with State and federal monitoring programs.

***Question: Financing***

**3**

The applicant does not fully describe financing for implementation and O&M costs. The local funds by project or fund source are not explicitly identified in the IRWMP, although some general categories are listed. A more detailed plan is needed.

***Question: Relation to Local Planning & Sustainability***

**4**

The applicant will serve as the coordinating body to identify and resolve policy terms and practices between the local plans and the IRWMP. Among the groups formed to support regional planning are a land use subcommittee from the Calleguas Creek Watershed Management effort and a City/County Planning Association, which meets monthly. In addition to extensive coordination with State and federal agencies, over 120 local agencies are represented. Providing the relationship of specific actions in the IRWMP to specific sections in local planning documents would have resulted in a higher score.

***Question: Stakeholder Involvement & Coordination***

**4**

The Calleguas Creek Watershed Management Plan Group has been working since 1996 towards regional planning and has held public meetings, published informational brochures, and updated its efforts to match the Guidelines. The Ventura Countywide IRWM Group was formed in 2002 and local agency have contributed towards development of an IRWMP. More discussion on the stakeholder process related to EJ and DAC concerns would have resulted in a full score. The applicant provides the forum for conflict resolution and has identified areas of potential conflict with wetlands and within the context of statewide priorities.

<b>Weighted IRWMP Total Score:</b>	<b>23</b>
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***Question: Work Plan***

**12**

The proposed projects are summarized, and overall the application addresses the criterion well. Each of the eleven projects is discussed including the goals and objectives, tabulated overview, maps, synergies and linkages, budget, permitting and CEQA, project status, and what is to be built or performed. Plans and specifications were submitted for four of the proposed projects. Seven projects are still in conceptual stages, preliminary design stages, or pilot project phase. Tasks are clearly described with expected outcomes, but there is not much discussion on how the individual projects will accomplish overall goals of the IRWMP. More detail on how the work, including construction, will be performed is needed in the work plan.

***Question: Budget***

**4**

The budget items generally agree with the work plan and schedule. The budgets for all of the proposed projects have cost information by task and the costs are considered reasonable. However, it is difficult to review the detailed budgets without more narrative explanation. The construction contingencies for Projects C-1, C-3, and C-7 need more explanation. O&M costs are included for some projects.

***Question: Funding Match***

**5**

The funding match is 62% of the total proposal costs.

***Question: Schedule***

**4**

Six of the 11 projects are scheduled to be implemented before December 1, 2007. The schedules are consistent and generally reasonable. However, some schedules appear overly optimistic. For example, Projects C-11 and SC-3 have construction start dates in October/November 2006, yet design and permitting are not complete.

***Question: Scientific and Technical Merit***

**12**

The applicant has documented each project thoroughly with the associated studies or plans that support the technical and scientific merits of the proposal. Included in the supporting documents are plans, design alternatives and studies, and required CEQA documents or permits. However, more explanation in the application how the references were applied to a specific proposed project would have provided assurance of the projects technical feasibility.

***Question: Monitoring, Assessment and Performance Measures***

**5**

The Monitoring, Assessment, and Performance Measures tables provide a concise description of reasonable means to achieve or contribute to the project goals and targets for each goal of the individual projects. The C-1 Brine Line QAPP was included in the proposal; it is detailed and specifies all collection and analytical protocols from tracking to instrument calibration. For most of the other projects procedural assurance protocols are to be included in the funded activities.

***Question: Economic Analysis***

**12**

The quality of the economic analysis and supporting documentation is good. The PV of costs is estimated to be \$91.8 million and the PV of quantified benefits is estimated to be \$80.2 million. Total quantified water supply is about 9,600 AF. Operation costs for Ventura County WWD recycling project (250 AF) are not included. Benefits claimed are less than costs, but a variety of benefits claims are conservative. For example, reduced salinity for households and Calleguas/Camarillo feeder avoided costs are not included and the use of fines as a proxy for water quality benefits probably understates the benefits. The economics of the two most costly projects depend on a larger planned project that includes a brine line and six groundwater desalters.

***Question: Other Expected Benefits***

**8**

Each of the Other Expected Benefits claimed is described well and summarized in a table. The Other Expected Benefits are qualified with a discussion and references demonstrating both the potential and the uncertainty of each claimed benefit. The Other Expected Benefits from at least 8 of the 11 projects appear straight forward and fairly certain and are generally improved habitat, ecology, or recreation; avoided Bay-Delta impacts from exports; and avoided fertilizer costs. Benefits were at a moderate to high level.

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#### ***Question: Program Preferences***

5

Overall, the projects when implemented should provide multiple benefits, improve regional water supply reliability, contribute to attaining water quality standards, address impaired water bodies, and improve groundwater water quality in a DAC. The Calleguas Creek projects integrate salt management, riparian habitat improvements, water reuse facilities, and water treatment plant improvements. Santa Clara River projects focus on pollutant load reduction, infrastructure development, and regulatory compliance. Ventura River projects address watershed planning and monitoring, groundwater recharge operations, and treatment plant operation. The purpose of some activities is to meet regulatory requirements, such as salt and nutrient loadings, TMDLs, and address impaired water bodies on the 303(d) list. Removing septic systems and installing lines to a WWTP will help to meet RWQCB requirements and improve the local water resource, including those of a groundwater dependent DAC (El Rio).

#### ***Question: Statewide Priorities***

24

Documentation is comprehensive and thorough. The applicant summarizes and explains how each set of Statewide Priorities would be met in each of the three major watersheds. The certainty of meeting Statewide Priorities will depend on obtaining required permits and completion of unfinished project design and subsequent work plans. Some conflicts between water users will likely be reduced from those projects that increase water supply, particularly the C-1, C-11, and V-1 projects. TMDL and portions of the NPS Plan will be implemented by at least 4 projects. The Calleguas Watershed projects demonstrate, at a minimum, a moderate degree success in meeting floodplain management, desalination of groundwater, or recycling priorities. Benefits to Delta and the CALFED Bay-Delta Program are claimed but are not expected to be significant or certain. Surface water right conflicts are only marginally addressed.

<b>Total Proposal Score:</b>	<b>114</b>
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